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ABSTRACT

Most of the focus of research and debate about school exclusions in the United Kingdom has focused on secondary-age pupils. This paper presents findings of a study that hopes to inform preventative work with primary-age children who display great difficulties in mainstream and special schools. The paper examines evidence about the incidence and nature of primary school exclusions and debates some of the issues that make the practice of excluding students a serious concern. Data were obtained from a nationwide questionnaire of 46 local education agencies (LEAs), regional case studies of three LEAs, and analysis of the records of 265 children who were excluded within the three LEAs. Findings indicate that current data-collection methods are inadequate to accurately identify the excluded students. The few exclusions during the 1993-94 academic year were for usually one or more fixed terms. There were proportionately fewer reported exclusions from voluntary aided and controlled schools than would be expected from the proportion of school provision they offer. Exclusion from primary school was shown to be a relatively rare event, and permanent exclusion from primary school was even more unusual. However, boys were overrepresented among those students who were excluded. The rarity of the event suggests that more practical attention should be given to the educational and social needs of these children. Nineteen tables are included. (Contains 33 references.) (LMI)

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ED 392 146

Primary School Exclusions

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Summary

Most of the focus of research and debate about school exclusions in the U.K. has been about secondary age pupils, which is not surprising in that secondary school exclusions are much more numerous than at the primary school stage, accounting for approximately 87% of all permanent exclusions (DfE, 1992). However, the research reported here takes the longer view and thus hopes to inform preventative work with primary age children, who are displaying great difficulties in mainstream schools, and special schools. It is based on the hope that there might be more potential for "success" when children are helped earlier. As primary age exclusions are relatively unusual they may present a different order of concern, in relation to the excluded children themselves.

This paper will examine evidence about the incidence and nature of primary school exclusions and debate some of the issues which make these exclusions a particularly serious focus for concern. The data from a national questionnaire, three regional case studies and 265 excluded children within them, is reported here. The research project was supported by a grant from the Economic and Social Research Council.

Background

Research into school exclusions is difficult to undertake for a number of reasons. It is difficult to get access to good quality reliable information, as Copeland (1994) has noted. It is also difficult to get access to representative groups of excluded children, not least for legal and ethical reasons. It is also a very sensitive issue for all parties concerned. Most LEAs[1] do not make information about exclusion publically available, although they will produce reports for the limited consumption of education committees. Schools do not generally discuss the practice of excluding pupils openly, although it is acknowledged that exclusion might be variously interpreted by current and future parents in a school. That is exclusion might be seen as part of a 'get tough' discipline policy which may appeal to some parents, or it can be seen as a sign of indiscipline and failure in a school (Mihill, 1995). In a climate of competition for pupils the value of making information about exclusion public is uncertain. OFSTED reports on individual schools are the only way the public will generally get access to official figures for exclusion for a particular school. Within LEAs there are other reasons why obtaining accurate data about levels of exclusion is difficult. These reasons partly relate to personnel and staffing. That is the delegation of budgets to schools has left LEAs with reduced staffing levels, which can make establishing and maintaining record keeping systems extremely problematic. There is also the issue of whether schools always report exclusions to the local authority. Furthermore, when schools do report exclusions to the LEA they do not always supply enough information, particularly in the case of fixed term exclusions, for a meaningful record to be made. All of these factors help to explain the difficulties of obtaining accurate and meaningful data about exclusions in the United Kingdom.

In order to try and overcome the difficulties identified above, the research was designed in

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1 LEA: Local Education Authority

such a way that at the level of case study LEAs, a great deal of effort was put into cross referencing and checking official records by identifying individual named children excluded over a particular timeframe. We were also mindful of the likely difficulties and obstacles when we set out to obtain the best quality national data at the time of conducting the case studies. We sought to establish an estimate of the rate of incidence of primary school exclusion across as many different LEAs as possible in order to consider whether these rates showed any particular patterns. Incidence of exclusion was chooses as the basis upon which to report the national data, rather than number of children excluded, as it was found that more LEAs kept data as incidence of exclusion, rather than by individual excluded child. The national data was also collected in order to provide a framework within which to understand the case study LEAs. After returns from the national questionnaires were received three contrasting LEAs were visited and the information they supplied cross referenced, amended and verified to arrive at the most accurate information possible. We found when verifying data that LEA staff could relate better to whether information was accurate about named children, rather than statistics. LEA staff were thus able to make us aware when excluded primary school children with whom they were working, did not appear in the date.

The LEAs include a large County Council (LEA1) and two inner London Boroughs (LEAs 2 and 3). Fieldwork in these three LEAs yielded carefully collated data on 265 primary age children excluded from school during the 1993-94 school year. These children are fairly evenly divided between those resident in the County Council (134,50.6%) and those resident in the two inner London Boroughs (131,49.4%). In the three LEAs visited there were cases of recorded primary school exclusion which were documented in the Education Department offices but which did not appear in the totals supplied to the University questionnaire or in Departmental documents. That is there was consistent under reporting,

in particular records were not always updated which tended to mean an undercounting of permanent exclusions. Although this amounted to only a handful of additional excluded children in two of the three case study LEAs, in the other authority the extra cases of official exclusion uncovered during the fieldwork amounted to an additional 20% of the original total of excluded children.

The National Picture (the 1992-93 school year and autumn term 1993).

The national picture and estimates provided in this paper are presented with a cautionary note in view of the observations made in the last section. The fact that record keeping by incidence is most common means that figures on exclusion can give the impression that more children are being officially excluded than may be the case. On the other hand, the under-recording of exclusions already noted may balance out this over-recording. There is however, no reason to believe that the broad characteristics of information about excluded children presented here are unrepresentative. The data which will be used in this section was obtained from 46 LEAs across England and Wales, replying to a postal questionnaire which was sent out in January 1994. Information was obtained for the 1992-93 academic year and for the autumn term of 1993. The fieldwork in the case study LEAs was carried out during 1994 and for the case studies of excluded children related to the academic year 1993-94. It was for this reason that it was thought useful to obtain data for the part of the same academic year where data was available, that is autumn 1993. Contact was made with an additional 17 LEAs which were unable to respond to a questionnaire for a variety of reasons including not having easily accessible computerised data, pressure of work and staff shortages.

The combination of questionnaire, letters and reports, as well as telephone conversations has enabled a national picture of trends to be obtained. Information was obtained from at least one district in all the major conurbations, from inner and outer London Boroughs and

from a wide geographical range of County Councils. Theirs LEAs varied from one tiny LEA which was able to report:

*"I am told that there have been no exclusions in living memory from any of them (*ie the authority's schools*), either primary or secondary. Certainly there is no record of any".*

to one of the largest County Councils which officially excluded 943 schoolchildren (primary and secondary in one school term (autumn 1993), although permanent exclusions amounted to the lesser figure of 138 children.

A summary of the findings about numbers, rates and reasons given by schools for recorded exclusions, as well as the characteristics of these excluded children, will now be provided. Most of this section will focus on the whole year 1992-93. A national estimate will also be provided for the autumn term of 1993. Returns of the national questionnaire showed that not all LEAs could supply even relatively basic information, such as a breakdown in the number of exclusions by the two main school phases (primary and secondary). Therefore many of the tables of information which follow are not based on returns from all the 46 LEAs supplying information.

The Research

Whole year figures 1992-93

number and rate

Raw totals or numbers of exclusions are sometimes discussed without reference to the type of exclusion (Imich, 1994) and in the media figures have often been sensationalised (Copeland,1994), even in the quality press (for example, TES,19/11/93; Independent, 15/6/95). Certainly when the numbers run into thousands and we are referring to children, it is easy to understand why such figures can cause alarm, the more so when we are referring to primary school children. The figures in this section will be presented first as average numbers of exclusion (all types) by type of LEA and then translated into rates

per 1,000 primary school population.

Table 1: Average numbers, proportions and rates of primary school exclusions

Type of LEA	*Av no primary exclusions*	*Av % of all exclusions*	*Av.rate per 1000 total primary pop.*
London (n=6)	73	18	6
Metropolitan (n=10)	144	18	4
Co.Council (n=22)	77	11	1
(n=38)			

A comparison of average totals of incidence of primary school exclusions (Table 1) shows Metropolitan LEAs to have approximately twice (144) the average totals of either London (73) or County Council (77) LEAs. County Councils have more pupils, and London Boroughs have less pupils, to cater for on average than Metropolitan Districts. A comparison of primary and secondary exclusions in the sample revealed that overall primary exclusions represent 14% of all exclusions for 1992-93. Analysis by type of LEA, however (Table 1) shows that the highest rate of primary school exclusion (18%) is found in London and Metropolitan LEAs alike, while County Council LEAs show only 11 per cent.

The total number of all types of exclusion at primary level show London LEAs to have a higher rate of exclusion per 1,000 pupils, followed by Metropolitan LEAs and County Councils exclude very much fewer pupils. Perhaps one of the interesting features about the data for rates of exclusion, however, is the considerable variation between LEAs of the same type. For example, as may be expected, the highest exclusion rates per 1,000 total primary population were found in inner City LEAs, yet some inner city authorities registered very low rates. Data from questionnaires could not explain these variations although work in case study LEAs went some way towards explaining these differences.

	Permanent	*Indefinite*	*Fixed Term*	*Totals (%)*
London	13	8	79	100
Metropolitan	32	13	55	100
County Council	20	16	64	100

(n=38)

Characteristics of excluded primary age pupils

LEAs were asked to supply information about the characteristics (age, sex and ethnicity) of excluded primary age pupils. A significant number of LEAs were unable to do this. Thus the data in this subsection is based on the findings from 28 LEAs.

age and sex

The overwhelming majority of excluded primary children were boys, an average proportion of 90%, although this proportion varied a little across the different types of LEAs, as Table 3 illustrates.

Table 3: Sex of excluded pupils by LEA type.

Type of LEA	*% male*	*% female*
London	93	7
Metropolitan	90	10
County Council	88	12

(n=28)

It might be expected that a greater proportion of exclusions would be found in the older age range in primary schools and this was indeed the case in both County Councils and

Metropolitan Districts, the majority of respondents. However, this was not the case in London LEAs, where the proportion of exclusions across the primary age range was evenly divided between the younger and older age categories, as Table 5 illustrates.

Table 4: Age group of excluded children by type of LEA

	Age Group (%)	
Type of LEA	***5-8 years***	***9-11 years***
London	50	50
Metropolitan	15	85
County Council	18	82

(n=28)

ethnicity

Information obtained on the ethnicity of excluded pupils was the most partial and is arguably one of the most controversial aspects of the exclusion debate. Only 15 of the 46 LEAs responding to the survey were able to supply data by ethnicity, most of these LEAs were either London Boroughs or Metropolitan Districts. Analysis of this relatively restricted sample of LEAs reveals some trends which were born out in more in-depth case study data. When the proportions of exclusions for four ethnic groups, African-Caribbean, Asian, Mixed race/Other and White, were compared with the proportion of these groups in the whole population of the individual LEA (1991 Census data), a number of patterns were found. White and Asian pupils tended to be under represented, while African-Caribbean and Mixed race/Other pupils tended to be over-represented in exclusion statistics by up to three times the proportion in the local population.

reasons for exclusion

Only a minority of LEAs (18) could provide details about reasons why children were excluded from school. The most commonly cited reasons were: refusal to comply with

school rules, physical aggression towards other pupils, verbal abuse of teachers and physical aggression towards members of staff. In addition, some LEAs indicated that the recorded reason for exclusion was in reality 'the last straw' in a series of misdemeanours culminating in an exclusion.

trends and a national estimate

Thirty four LEAs supplied comments, backed by evidence about trends in primary school exclusion over a four year period (starting in September 1990). The overall impression was of an increase in reported primary school exclusions, but in a context of an increase in reported exclusions overall. Only four LEAs replied indicating that there had been a decrease in primary age exclusions and three LEAs reported that the number of primary school exclusions had 'stayed about the same'.

1992-93

Most LEAs were able to provide data for the whole year 1992-93 in terms of incidence of exclusion but not always by individual child. Therefore the national estimate is based on reported incidence of exclusion.

- Nationally, we would estimate (see Table 5 below for method of calculation) that there was some **54,423 reported incidence of exclusion of all types**, both phases during the 1992-93 academic year.
- Of these, we would estimate **8,636 were permanent.**
- Overall, **primary exclusions of all types** (from the 43 LEAs able to supply these data separately) totalled 3,644 which, when extrapolated to provide a national estimate, becomes **10,122.**
- Of these **3,644 exclusions**, 430 (12%) were **permanent**, which would give a whole year figure of **1,215 permanent primary school** exclusions for 1992-93.

This data can now be compared with other data available. OFSTED inspections of secondary schools during the 1992-93 school year has led to an estimate of between 7,000 and 8,000 permanent secondary school exclusions (TES, 31/10/94). Our estimate for this year is 8,636 and includes primary as well as secondary recorded permanent exclusions and therefore looks comparable.

autumn term 1993

A calculation of a national estimate for all types of exclusions and specifically permanent exclusions during the autumn school term is shown below. The data referees to both primary and secondary pupils.

Table 5: National estimate of no of exclusions in the autumn term of 1993

type of LEA	total no. excl. children in LEA resps.	total no. perm. excls.	total school pop. in all LEAs (E+W)	multi-plying factor	est. perm. excls. nation-ally	total no. all excls.	multi-plying factor	national est. all types of excl.
London B (6)	113,386	105	907,117	8.0	840	964(6)	8.0	7,712
Met Distr. (11)	638,836	298	1,762,431	2.75	820	1,627(9)	3.27	5,317
Co Council (19)	1,458,175	615	4,775,615	3.27	2,011	3,992 (16)	4.48	17,656
total LEAs (36)	2,210,397	1,018	7,445,163	-	3,671	6,583 (31)	-	30,594

The estimated number of permanent primary exclusions in this term is 418, which might suggest a whole year total for 1993-94 of 1,253 if the original estimate is tripled to represent the whole school year, which is similar to that of the previous academic year. However, the fieldwork in three LEAs shows that there is generally and increase in the rate of exclusion over the school year. The overall total of 3,671 recorded permanent exclusions includes both primary and secondary exclusions and suggests almost a tripling in numbers over a three year period, when comparison is made with NERS whole year data for 1991-92, which recorded 3,833 permanent exclusions. The estimation of the total number of exclusions (all types) in this term, at 30,594, is more than half the total for the estimate in the previous whole academic year. Thus the autumn 1993 data suggest an increase in the number and rate of recorded exclusions when all types of exclusion are included, over this one year period. Parsons et al (1995) have produced a whole year estimate for 1993-94 of 11,181 permanent exclusions for England. A tripling of our autumn 1993 estimate would produce a similar whole year figure to Parsons et al (1995) at 11,013 exclusions (although our estimate includes Welsh authorities). Thus again our estimate is comparable with another. Some available national estimates for trends in officially recorded permanent exclusion are summarised below.

Table 6: Trends in official records of permanent exclusion Autumn 1990 - Autumn 1994

year	*all exclusions*	*primary only*
1990-91	2,910	378
1991-92	3,833	537
1992-93	**8,636**	**1,215**
1993-94	11,181(**11,013**)	1,297(**1,253**)
Autumn '94	4,788	555

(Source:highlighted estimates are from the University of Portsmouth;1990-91 and 1991-92 are DfE (1993); 1993-94 and autumn 1994 are Parsons et al,1995).

exclusion and special education need

The national questionnaire also tried to investigate whether or not LEAs made any association between the issue of special educational needs provision and exclusion from school. This is a hotly debated issue and one with resource implications should any clear principles be established (see for example, Special Educational Consortium, January 1993;AMA,1995.) At one extreme there is the view that children excluded from school have by definition some form of special educational need, in that the school can not or will not contain them. On the other hand there is a view that exclusion is a way of claiming that a child has special educational needs, rather than is simply 'naughty' or 'disaffected', extra needs which require additional resources from the LEA. Money for statementing is the only source left in LEAs from which schools can gain access to additional resources, other than special projects and GEST funded initiatives.

Overwhelmingly LEAs reported increases in requests for formal assessment, between September 1990 and 1993, which the AMA (1995) report has also shown. However, it would seem from the questionnaire returns that relatively few LEAs routinely check on the special educational needs status of children excluded from school. About a quarter of the

LEAs supplying information recorded whether excluded children held a statement of special educational need at the time of their exclusion. A higher proportion of London Boroughs and Metropolitan Districts record this information than do County Councils. Most LEAs were unsure about the extent to which exclusion might be about special educational needs, but only a minority of LEAs (6,13%) responded that it was *not* an SEN issue. A quarter of LEAs however, expressed the opinion that there was a clear connection between issues of special educational need and exclusion. The reasons given for this perceived connection related to whether there was appropriate provision for children with special educational needs and specifically the group of children classified as having emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Case Study LEAs

The last section has illustrated that the information available from the national questionnaire is patchy and incomplete in many respects. However this data was thoroughly checked and amended in the case study LEAs and having collected national data it is possible to make some assessments about how representative the case study LEAs might be. As it was highlighted at the beginning of this chapter, it is not easy to gain access to LEAs to conduct this sort of research, therefore the 'choice' was limited, although there was more choice after the first case study had been completed and the project had received some publicity. Although certain LEAs which had shown some initial interest in being case studies, later decided not to participate in the research. Thus from the limited choice available the London Boroughs in particular were chosen for very different reasons. One of the Boroughs was one of the few LEAs nationally to report a reduction in primary school exclusions and excluded very few such children permanently. The other London Borough had very minimal data on trends and characteristics of excluded primary school children, but had made the interesting decision to contract out its

support and EOTAS services to an external market registered as a charity, that is 'Cities in Schools'. Both inner London Boroughs had substantial Black and minority ethnic sections of the population, which were relatively few in the County Council. In many other respects these three LEAs encompass a wide variety of socio-economic, political and educational environments.

Comparing the number and rate of exclusion

Figures about exclusion can be presented in a range of ways, many of which can be misleading. In an attempt to present the most meaningful data in this respect, exclusions in each LEA are shown both as numbers and rates per 1,000 school population, with separate figures for primary school pupils only. Figures for autumn 1993 also include rates per 1,000 school population for permanent exclusion. This data is not given for the 1992-93 period because it was not available in LEA3 and in LEA1 it was not available for all of the school year in all of the divisions. Finally the ration of primary to secondary school exclusions is shown for the autumn 1993 period, for all types of exclusion and specifically for permanent exclusions.

1992-93

Table 7: Number and rate of exclusion

	all exclusions		*primary exclusions only*	
	no	*rate per 1,000*	*no*	*rate per 1,000*
LEA1	2,560	12.1	352	2.7
LEA2	568	42.0	101	11.57
LEA3	606	36.3	87*	11.8

*estimate based on London average proportion of primary school exclusions. Figures supplied did not differentiate between primary and secondary school pupils.

Autumn 1993

Table 8: Number and rate of exclusion

	Primary and Secondary			*Primary exclusions*		
	number	*rate per 1,000*		*no*	*rate per 1000*	
		all	*permanent*		*all*	*permanent*
LEA1	943	4.4	0.65	172	1.3	0.41
LEA2	228	16.9	1.6	31	3.6	0.68
LEA3	219	13.0	1.0	11	1.2	0.76

Table 9: The Ratio of primary to secondary exclusions

	all excl.	*permanent only*
LEA1	1:5.5	1:8
LEA2	1:7.7	1:21
LEA3	1:20	1:8

Table 8 presents whole year figures from the postal questionnaire returns, The autumn 1993 data is more detailed because fieldwork helped to produce this data. Table 8 also illustrates the dramatic difference in the rate of exclusion between LEA1, the County Council and the two inner London Boroughs. Interestingly LEA2 has three times the rate (at 3.6 per 1,000) of recorded primary exclusions (all types) found in LEA3 (at 1.2 per 1,000). Although this may in part relate to an alleged under-reporting of fixed term exclusions from the large proportion of voluntary aided schools in the Borough. When comparison is made with the national data it can be seen that all three case study LEAs are relatively high excluders of primary age children. The rate of primary exclusions in LEA1 is almost twice the rate found in other County Councils, where the average rate in autumn 1993 was 0.7 per 1,000. However, there was a range of rates of exclusion across the four division of this LEA, from 0.7 to 1.7 per 1,000. The two divisions where the rate of exclusion was higher were the two divisions with large inner city areas, however these

were also areas where middle schools were still in existence. When the year 7 exclusions were taken out of the calculation in these two divisions, the rate of exclusion dropped substantially, to the rate for one of the more affluent areas of the County in the case of one of the cities. Official figures for exclusion in the County were less than those found during the course of fieldwork, therefore the rate of exclusion in this County is also affected by the fieldwork. The two London Boroughs are either above (LEA2) or below (LEA3) the average for these Boroughs, which was 1.96 per 1,000 in autumn 1993. However, the picture for permanent exclusion is a little different, with the London Boroughs being somewhat closer in their rate of permanent exclusion of both primary and secondary pupils, than is the case for all types of exclusion. Table 8 illustrates how it is the County Council which has the highest ration of primary to secondary school exclusions. In LEA2, whilst the rate of exclusion overall and primary school exclusion in particular is the highest of the three LEAs, these exclusions are more usually not of the permanent type. Thus, Table 8 shows that it is LEA3 which has the highest rate of permanent primary school exclusions per 1,000 population (0.76) in comparison with the other LEAs.

Analysis of data on file for 265 excluded primary age children

Data available in the education department was collated for primary age children who were identified as having been excluded over a particular timeframe, this related to the autumn term of 1993 only in LEA1 and the whole school year (1993-94) in LEAs 2 and 3. There were two reasons why whole year figures were collated in the two London Boroughs, but not in the County Council. The main reason was that there were insufficient children excluded in one school term in the inner London Boroughs to provide a good chance of gaining access to families for the purpose of the in-depth case studies and for a comparison group of a similar size to the children identified in LEA1. The second reason related to

fieldwork practicalities, the collation of reliable data for even one school term in the County Council was an onerous task. This stage of the fieldwork in the County Council involved the collation of information kept in manual ledgers and filing cabinets to a large extent and the tracking of files on individual children which sometimes were on the desks of individual caseworkers, across four different divisions of the County. Furthermore, all three sections of the service (admissions/exclusions; special educational needs; educational welfare) were not on the same site in two of the four divisions.

Table 10: Types of exclusion recorded (by incidence and by individual)

	*LEA1**	*LEA2*	*LEA3*	*totals*
permanent	18(18)	2(2)	7(7)	27(27)
indefinite	27(22)	9(9)	1(1)	37(32)
aggregate**	-	7(6)	-	7(6)
fixed	127(94)	146(95)	31(27)	304(216)
total incidence	172	164	39	375
total individuals	(134)	(99)(32)		265

* Figures for LEA1 relate to one term only. Figures for LEAs 2 and 3 are whole year 1993-94.

** aggregate exclusion was a term utilised in LEA2 only, to refer to children who had more than five days exclusion accumulated over a term. (n=265)

Table 10 illustrates how very many fewer individual children are involved in exclusion incidents than might be recorded, if all types of exclusion are noted. Permanent exclusions are of course usually only resorted to once in the relatively short timeframe of a school year. Permanent exclusions are, as Table 10 shows, very unusual events. Although several of our individual case studies of children revealed that they had been the subject of previous permanent exclusion(s) in another school year. Furthermore some children were the subject of more than one indefinite exclusion even within one school term in LEA1. It was more usual that fixed term exclusions were the most common incidence, with some

children having several of these over the timeframe monitored. Sometimes of course a fixed term exclusion was the forerunner to more serious exclusion events.

Table 11: Number of exclusions by individual

no of exclusions	LEA1*	LEA2	LEA3	totals
	no.(%)	no.(%)	no.(%)	no.(%)
1	96(71.6)	70(70.5)	26(81)	192(72.5)
2	33(24.6)	15(15.2)	3(9.5)	51(19.2)
3	2(1.5)	7(7.1)	-	12(4.5)
4	3(2.2)	1(1)	-	4(1.5)
5+	-	6(6.1)	-	6(2.3)
total no children	134	99	32	265(100)

* Figures for LEA1 relate to one term only. Figures for LEAs 2 and 3 are for whole year 1993-94.

The above table demonstrates that the number of children who have had more than one exclusion during the period of study make up over a quarter (73,27.5%) of the children investigated. This is a very small number of primary school children, when one considers the fact that the primary school population in these three LEAs amounted to nearly 150,000 children in the 1993-94 academic year. It would appear that the London Boroughs do not resort to several recorded exclusions over a short timeframe as readily as schools do in the County Council. Individuals with several recorded exclusions at primary school level are even more rare.

Table 12: Year Group of excluded children

year group	*LEA1 no(%)*	*LEA2 no(%)*	*LEA3 no(%)*	*totals no (%)*
R/1	3	6	-	9
2	9	13	4	26
3	12	12	3	28

sub-total	***24 (18)***	***31 (31.3)***	***7 (22.6)***	***63 23.8)***
4	17	22	4	43
5	28	26	7	60
6	33	21	13	67
7	31	n/a	n/a	31
sub-total	***109 (82)***	***69 (69.7)***	***24 (77.4)***	***201 (76.2)***
totals	134 (100)	99 (100)	31 (100)	264 (100)

(n=264, information not available for one child)

NB. Years R/1-3 equate with the 5 to 8 year old grouping in the national data. Years 4-6 equate with the 9 to 11 year olds. Year 7 children are twelve year olds in the last year of middle school in LEA1.

Overall years R/1 to 3 account for nearly a quarter (23.8%) of the recorded exclusions across the three LEAs, with LEA2 having the highest proportion of excluded primary children in this age category (31.3%). Years 4 to 6 (and 7 in the case of LEA1) account for over three-quarters (76.2%) of all recorded primary school exclusions across these three LEAs. Table 11 shows that although exclusion does occur even at reception class level this is extremely rare. Comparison with the national data shows that LEA1 has exactly the same groupings of children in terms of age as the County Councils in the 1992-93 data. Whilst both the London Boroughs have a lower proportion of excluded younger children, than was the case in comparison with the London Borough average.

Table 13: Sex of excluded children

sex	***LEA1 no (%)***	***LEA2 no (%)***	***LEA3 no (%)***	***totals no (%)***
male	124 (92.5)	87 (87.5)	30 (94)	241 (91)
female	10 (7.5)	12 (12.5)	2 (6)	24 (9)
totals	**100**	**100**	**100**	**265 (100)**

(n=265)

Overall the sex of excluded children in the case study LEAs, when totalled, very much

reflects that found in the national survey. However, there is a range in the rates and proportions of excluded primary age girls across the three LEAs, with LEA2 for example having twice the proportion of girls excluded as in LEA3. As with the national data, excluded primary age children were overwhelmingly found to be boys, with the ration being one girl for every nine primary age boys excluded.

Table 14: Ethnicity of children excluded from LEA2 (not available for other LEAs)

ethnic group	*number (%)*	*% of 0-9 year olds (Census data, 1991)*
Black African	6 (6.1)	4.4
Black Caribbean	30 (30.3)	8.0
Black Other	1 (1.0)	5.4
Other	4 (4.0)	5.3
White	38 (38.4)	70.3
Not given	5 (5.05)	-
Not known	10 (10.1)	-
Missing	5 (5.05)	-
Total	**99 (100)**	**93.4**

(n=99)

Only one of the three LEAs had any routine recording of ethnicity of excluded children, even then the information was not always recorded for a variety of reasons (20 cases, 20.2%). The pattern of exclusion in this LEA very much mirrors the information available from the national questionnaire and from other research with respect to African Caribbean boys. According to local authority data African Caribbean children are more numerous in the school population, than would be suggested by Census data for the whole population. Census data for the 0-9 year old age groups has been used to illustrate the relative proportions of different Black and minority ethnic children in comparison with the

ethnicity of excluded primary age children. In all over half (41,52%) of all exclusions in LEA2 where ethnicity is recorded, are of children from Black and minority ethnic groups, whereas they make up less than a third of the primary school population (29.7%). However, the data reveals that ti is a very specific ethnic group which is over-represented amongst excluded children, that is African-Caribbean children. In this Borough the data available shows an over-representation of African-Caribbean children amongst excluded primary age pupils to the tune of nearly four times their number in the population. When one considers the fact that the majority of these children are boys (27,90%), their over-representation in the exclusions statistics is really between seven and eight times their number in the school population. In comparison all other ethnic groups, including Black African and Black 'Other' children are under-represented in exclusion statistics. In fact Asian, Bangladesh, Chinese, Indian and Pakistani children together make up 6.6% of the primary school population of this LEA, but no cases of exclusion of these children were found during the 1993-94 academic year for LEA2.

Table 15: Reasons for exclusion (given by headteacher)

reason	*% of cases citing this reason*				
	LEA1	*LEA2*	*LEA3*	*overall total*	
				nos cases	*%cases*
physical aggression	55	55	57	142	53.6
verbal abuse	23	11.5	14	46	17.4
unacceptable behaviour	34	n/a	46	50	18.9
disobedience	20	10.5	39	43	16.2
disruption	12	3	18	23	8.7
other	27	20	12.5	43	16.2
no reason*	1.5	-	8	6	2.2

(n=265; * ie no reason recorded in 6 cases)

In LEA1 and LEA3 many cases cited more than one reason for incidence of exclusion. However, in LEA2 reasons for exclusion were standardized and coded on a reporting form which schools completed and sent to the LEA when they excluded a child. There is still a remarkable similarity in the main recorded reason for exclusion. Overall physical aggression, usually towards another pupil was the main recorded reason in over half of primary school exclusion, in all three LEAs. Two of the LEAs had records of exclusion which sometimes only had descriptions of behaviour, as 'unacceptable' in some way, although this was not always explained. Verbal abuse comprises a significant proportion of reasons for exclusion, along with disobedient and disruptive behaviour. There were a wide range of 'other' reasons given, including absconding from the school premises, smoking and vandalism.

Table 16: Evidence of high levels of Special Educational Need

(additional support requested from the LEA)

	% of cases where this is a factor				
	LEA1	*LEA2*	*LEA3*	*overall totals*	
				nos cases	*% cases*
statemented	38	15	19	71	26.8
in process of assessment	18	15	13	43	16.2
totals	**56**	**30**	**32**	**114**	**43.0**

(n=265)

Evidence of significant special educational need was found in a large proportion of cases in all three LEAs, most dramatically so in LEA1. It is difficult to offer a precise reason why the differences between the County Council and Inner London boroughs are so marked, although it is likely to relate to policy and practice in the different LEAs with respect to

making EBD statements and providing for such pupils. Both the London Boroughs had clear policies in their provision for excluded primary age pupils. In all of these LEAs, there was enough concern about many of the childrens identified or possible special educational needs prior to the exclusion for a formal assessment to have taken place and in some cases a statement issued, which means that they had already been significantly prioritised within the school to gain access to the limited time of an educational psychologist. Educational psychologist time usually amounted to two half days a term for most of the primary schools visited and only half a day in the very small schools. However, educational psychologists have very different ways of working in some LEAs which have not been visited in this research and may be more available when schools need them in some localities. Where the children were already statemented at the time of their exclusion, it was almost always for EBD. It was common to initiate or try to initiate a formal assessment process after a child was excluded from school.

For the 65 children across the three LEAs, who had more serious (permanent, indefinite, aggregate) types of exclusion during the 1993-94 academic year, evidence of special educational need was very apparent. If other documented indicators of the need for additional support are included, such as the use of a behaviour support team with the individual and EP advice and observation; 85% of these children had evidence of either special educational need or strong evidence of concern that this might be an issue.

Table 17: Evidence of agencies involved with child/family

	% of cases where this was apparent			*overall totals*	
	LEA1	*LEA2*	*LEA3*	*nos cases*	*% cases*
social services	37	33	34	94	35.5
1+non mainstream a'cy	81	89	66	219	82.6

(n=265)

According to information available on education files the majority of children and families were already in receipt of support from non-mainstream agencies. Non-mainstream agencies have been defined as those agencies which only become involved with a child or family when problems have arisen, at home or school (or in both contexts). Social services was the most frequent type of support families were receiving. Other agencies included educational welfare/education social work, child and family guidance/therapy, hospital based interventions and occasionally charities (such as the NSPCC). It is likely that this part of the research has underestimated the range of support families have received, as the research relies upon the information known to education departments. Education departments only had this kind of information about families if the child had education welfare involvement and/or special educational needs. Nevertheless this data suggests a group of children and families already well known to be in need by a range of services.

Again for the 65 children who had the more serious types of exclusion there was strong evidence of major concerns about and within the families and home circumstances. Over three quarters (76.6%) of these children had either social services involvement with the family, child and family guidance or psychiatric services, or some other form of therapeutic and family based work. There was evidence of the involvement of one or more non mainstream agencies in the vast majority of cases (61.91%). There was a total absence of any data in the special needs and educational welfare sections of the education service on only four of the children who had serious exclusions. This may be explained by the findings in individual case studies. Individual case studies showed that many of the children had very disrupted backgrounds, particularly those children who had been in the care of the local authority. Children who moved between different parts of the County in LEA1, across London Boroughs and to and from other parts of the Country, sometimes

did not get their educational records transferred quickly enough for appropriate provision to be in place. There was also evidence in the fieldwork that schools were not always told about the level of a chil's need because of a belief that a school would not accept the child if their problems were made clear to a school before their admission.

patterns across schools

Analysis of the information across schools in each LEA produced some interesting and thought provoking results. At the level of LEA, a higher proportion of primary schools had excluded a child during the autumn term of 1993 in the London Boroughs in comparison with the County Council (LEA1), as Table 17 illustrates below.

Table 18: Proportion of schools excluding one or more pupils in the autumn term of 1993

LEA1 1:8

LEA2 1:3

LEA3 1:5

However, the majority of schools had officially excluded only one or two children and usually only for a fixed term period. Many of these exclusions were under five days in duration and do not legally have to be reported to the LEA, although all the LEAs encouraged schools to report such exclusions. There reported exclusions were disproportionately from County, rather than voluntary aided/controlled schools in each LEA, as is summarised in Table 18 which follows.

Table 19: Types of schools excluding pupils

	% of exclusions by type of school	
	County	*Voluntary Aided/Controlled*
LEA1	92.5 (75)*	7.5 (25)
LEA2	86.0 (62)	14.0 (38)

LEA3	53.0 (34)	47.0 (66)

* Figures in brackets relate to the proportions of these schools found in each LEA.

The research indicates that some schools are certainly more successful than others in avoiding a recorded fixed term exclusion for a primary age child. The permanent exclusions appear to be a much more haphazard less predictable and rare event (ie in term of occurrence at a particular school). However, there is still a recording issue here, some headteachers reported a particularly good relationship with the LEA, usually because they had been part of various LEA behaviour management initiatives. Such schools expected the LEA to take them seriously when they said they could not continue to contain a child, such a child was likely to go on to a special school or unit and not necessarily have a record of a permanent exclusion.

Each LEA had schools which stood out as relatively 'high' excluders, in that they had excluded several children in a relatively short period of time. For example 6 (out of a total of over 500) primary schools in LEA1 had excluded 5 or more children by the end of a whole school year. Yet only 2 out of a total of 41 schools in LEA3 had excluded 5 or more children over the same time period. Thus the relatively 'high' excluding schools at primary level are those which used and recorded fixed term exclusions. Fieldwork tended to show that this related to some extent to the headteachers' view of fixed term exclusion as a disciplinary measure. Fieldwork in LEAs 1 and 2 also revealed particular situations in relation to an EBD special school in each of the LEAs. In both LEAs these special schools had fairly major staffing problems, relating to sickness in one case and both staff recruitment and sickness in the other case. Also there was no possibility of such schools being able to set in motion speedy arrangements to transfer children to other facilities, as this usually would mean the extremely expensive option of an 'out of County' residential placement.

Evidence from the case studies of exclusion, as well as interviews with LEA staff would suggest that extreme caution would be needed before any assessment of patterns of exclusion across primary schools is made. One reason for this is the belief, expressed most strongly in LEA3, that voluntary aided/controlled schools did not always report fixed term exclusions to the LEA. Most of the exclusions were under five days in duration and schools do not have to report them to the LEA anyway and possibly some County schools also do not always report these exclusions. Another reason is the evidence that information is not always accurately recorded at LEA level. For example one primary school, which was spoken of highly by a senior member of staff in LEA2, because it was said not to resort to exclusion, was found during fieldwork to be the *highest* fixed term excluder in the Borough. Data on this school (and others) had not been sent to the statistics department for a period. Much longer term monitoring, over a period of years, would be needed to make a fair assessment about any patterns of exclusion across primary schools.

Conclusions

The national questionnaire has illustrated that data collection systems about exclusion from school are in many ways inadequate. Although there is clear evidence from the University of Portsmouth research, and other sources, that there is a more than threefold increase in records of exclusion over a four year period (1990-1994). However, there is a failure in many local authorities to distinguish between incidence of exclusion and individual child excluded. There is a failure to systematically collect data about all of the key characteristics of excluded pupils, even basic characteristics like age and sex of individuals were absent in some LEA data. There are insufficient LEAs monitoring exclusions by ethnicity, which is particularly worrying given the evidence presented here (and noted by

Stirling(1993) and Bourne et al,1994) that certain groups, particularly African Caribbean boys are over-represented in exclusions statistics. There is also a lack of systematic monitoring of whether excluded children have evidence of special educational needs. However, the fieldwork in the three LEAs illustrated why this is so at a practical if not a political level. The main practical reasons were lack of staff; sometimes through absence and ill health and sometimes because an appointment had not been made. There were also staff changes in all three case study LEAs during the period of fieldwork, which meant that different people had the responsibility for channelling, recording and reporting upon the data. Furthermore, as already stated, schools did not always supply the LEA with all the information requested and there were very limited possibilities for following up and getting such data, again because of lack of staff. Each of the London Boroughs had only one member of staff to deal with recording and following up exclusions, in each case this was only supposed to be a relatively small part of their work. Both individuals reported that it tended to dominate their working week. A similar picture as found in the County Council, where each division had only one person dealing with exclusions, for part of their working week.

The broad patterns of exclusion are in many ways more predictable, with urban and inner city environments having higher rates of reported exclusion. But an unevenness between schools in comparable areas was detectable within case study LEAs, also found in the work of Galloway *1985) and Imich (1994). However, if primary schools excluded at all during the 1993-94 academic year it was usually only one or more fixed term exclusions. It is noticeable that there were proportionately fewer reported exclusions from Voluntary Aided and Controlled schools, than would be expected from their proportion of school provision. Exclusion from primary school is shown to be a relatively rare event, with permanent primary school exclusions being even more unusual. It is very much an event

which is happening predominantly to young boys. It is clear that the very rarity of the event itself suggests that more practical attention should be given to the educational and social needs of these children. There is certainly evidence that many of these young children have acknowledged high levels of special educational need and have come to the attention of non mainstream agencies, usually because of concern about their family circumstances. These latter generalisations are all the more true for the small group of children who have had the more serious types of exclusion (variously referred to as indefinite, aggregate, and of course permanent).

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